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The Relation of the College to the Church,

OR,

THE NECESSITY OF A CHRISTIAN EDUCATON;

A DISCOURSE

—DELIVERED—

BEFORE THE SYNOD OF NASHVILLE,

—BY—

REV. J. B. SHEARER. D.D.,

—AT—

CLARKSVILLE, TENNESSEE, OCT, 1872.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF SYNOD.

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MEMPHIS, TENN:

MEMPHIS PRESBYTERIAN JOB PRINT, 238 MAIN STREET.
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THE RELATION OF THE COLLEGE TO THE CHURCH;

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THE NECESSITY OF A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

There are so many phases of this important subject that I feel myself at liberty to discuss those views in which I feel the most interest, and in the furtherance of which I am engaged with all my heart and soul.

Allow me to present several passages of Scripture, with brief comments, as furnishing the groundwork of this discussion:

FIRST PRINCIPLES.

Gen. 1:1.—"In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth."

The evident meaning is that God is the great First Cause of all things.

Heb. 11:3.—"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

There is no right knowledge or conception of the creation except by faith. No wonder the unbelieving scientist, in searching blindly for all possible and impossible causes, becomes a skeptic or an atheist. The guidance of faith is neglected.

Acts 17:28.—"In Him we live, and move, and have our being."
Col. 1:17.—"By him all things consist."

There is a Providence in all God's works as necessary and important as creation itself. This Providence extends to all his creatures and to all their actions.

John 1:3.—"All things were made by him," *i. e.*, by the Son. He also is the providential ruler. Heb. 1:3,—where he is said to "uphold all thing by the word of his power."

Eph. 1:22 —"God hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church."

There is an object and a purpose in his creation and providence—a key to unlock the whole. What signifies this vast universe without Christ and his church?

Acts 14:17.—He left not himself without witness; in that he sent rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness."

The works of God all testify of him; the witnesses all agree and they ought to be heard.

1 Cor. 1:20.—"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? v. 21. "The world by wisdom knew not God." 1 Cor. 2:6—"Howbeit, we speak not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, which cometh to nought."

There is a mere worldly and secular knowledge, which is futile and vain. It perishes with its advocates before the wisdom of God.

1 Tim. 6:20.—"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called, *i. e.*, avoid the unconsecrated disputations and oppositions of a misnamed knowledge. This mere secular knowledge is misnamed, because it is partial and inadequate, and therefore false, either in its direct teaching or in its corollaries. It is unconsecrated, and therefore profane, captious and factious. Mere human learning always has been and always will be the enemy of the Cross of Christ.

These passages suggest facts and principles which are taken for granted. without extended exegesis, and which underlie the present discussion.

ADDRESS

There is no need at this day to argue the necessity of Education. Almost all classes stand forth as champions of this—the so-called bulwark of liberty and civilization. Even the enemies of a true Education are as loud and as earnest as any in advocacy of some system of Education. While there is apparent unity, wide differences prevail in definition, and also in the very conception of the proper *matter*, *methods*, and *agents* of Education. Vast progress and wonderful improvements are claimed on all hands in all that pertains to this important subject. These claims we cannot now discuss, nor even allude to, except as they may conflict with true theories lying directly in our path.

Suffice it to say: *That Education is the best which secures man's highest culture and development, comprehending his whole nature, physical, intellectual and moral, and which places him in his true relations to the universe of which he forms a part.*

Prevalent theories and systems embrace the physical and the intellectual, but largely neglect the moral. The notion is too prevalent that morality and religion should be left to the voluntary and unbiassed investigation of every man when he shall have attained to years of maturity, thus placing moral culture on the same footing with the amateur pursuit of the fine arts. Why not leave languages and sciences to the voluntary pursuit of amateur students, without the bias of teachers, whose views are crystalline and likely to warp the budding intellect of the pupil? There is a covert assumption that the principles of man's moral nature are more easily subverted than the intellectual, and that the distinctions of truth and righteousness are not so well founded as other forms of truth, or at least, are more easily per-

verted and abused. This we deny utterly. The mistaken jealousies of professed Christians have given the enemy the opportunity of foisting this wretched sophism upon a credulous public.

No partial development will do, for man is both intellectual and moral. All abnormal development of the one without the other is mischievous. Now we are prepared to see that *agent* as the best *who will best secure these results.*

WHO IS IT?

I. We may here remark that we, the Presbyterian Church, have spent our strength too much in discussing paltry issues. The heart and mind have been occupied with the distinctions of Parochial and non-Parochial, Ecclesiastical and non-Ecclesiastical, Presbyterian and Presbyterial, Church Schools and State Schools, Private Schools and Endowed Schools, &c., &c., until the true issues have been overlooked. These side issues have some importance and each party has its artillery of truth to cover it.

But why sacrifice the letter to the spirit? Learned doctors, with learned logic, discuss the nexus of the babe and its mother till the bantling dies. Neither party will allow the other to carry out his practice. Unity of view and action is sacrificed, and interest is abated in the main question. Opposition is excited at the bare mention of schools under Church auspices. Many are led to doubt the mission of the Church to educate at all. The result of all this is that the masses in the Church, who never master the nicer distinctions of ecclesiastical polemics, are *practically* taught that the Christian school is an *undesirable myth*, and the noblest conceptions of earnest Christian educators fall still born, while the Church is floated away from her moorings into the so-called liberalities of a Broadchurchism.

II. IT WAS NOT ALWAYS SO.

Presbyterians were once the pioneers in Education. While others were ignorantly declaiming against a learned ministry and college-bred hirelings, we were doing a noble work in this great cause. Nor is our prestige yet lost. And even to-day our standard of professional Education is higher than in any other Church of Christ.

Other Churches are competing nobly in the race, and we heartily bid them God speed in the work which we have been pushing on with all our might for generations past, by pre-

cept and example, and we rejoice that their example and competition are become a stimulus to us when we so much need it. The State, too, with its one-sided culture, is stepping forward as the great educator, professedly, for the masses, but really though covertly for all, as witness the system of State schools in Michigan culminating in her great University of 1200 students.

Disaster has overtaken our enterprises in the South-west, and we have lost ground both relatively and absolutely. And we *must* retrieve our position unless we would sacrifice the best interests of Zion. But more of this anon.

III. Education must be made the *handmaid* of religion—not an *eye-servant* nor a treacherous ally,—but a willing earnest servant in the family, recognizing no other master. The great problem is to sanctify a secular learning and convert it from the service of Satan to the service of God. Its attitude has been hostile in all ages. One of our leading thinkers said on the floor of the Assembly two years ago, that scholastic studies have always tended to rationalism and scientific studies to Atheism, and he added, "we have reason to fear they always will."

IS IT SO?

Is there no point of harmony between the profoundest scholasticism and an humble faith? Between the truths of nature and the truths of revelation? Is knowledge the bulwark of the enemy? It ought not to be. It shall not be. There is unity in truth. The same God is the author of it all. Science, in its widest acceptation, is but systematized knowledge, systematized for convenience, and for the furtherance of truth. It deals with essences, ascertains their properties and relations. It deals with the great facts of the Universe, ascertains their order and their correlations. Where is the man who can do more than slowly and painfully decipher the scroll and record his readings? Who will ascertain the cause, or decipher the reason why, or suggest the slightest improvement in the details and then execute it?

Nay, every fact is God's fact. Every essence is his handiwork. The entire order and correlation are his also. "Who hath taught him or been his counsellor?" "It is he that sitteth in the circle of the heavens, that stretcheth them out as a curtain, as a tent to dwell in." "Through faith we know that the worlds were framed by the word of God."

Nature and Revelation are the product of the same hand, and he most intimate harmony and unity pervade them both. They overlap each other in endless points of detail. Neither is complete to man as he is without the other. Each is the interlinear translation of the other, and faith interprets the whole.

"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Who will dare pronounce the decree of divorce?

But they have been divorced by the folly of conceited scholastics and atheistic worshippers of nature. They have been practically divorced by well meaning men who honestly disclaim all rationalism on the one hand, and atheism on the other. The modern fashion of teaching each separate branch of science as a self-sufficient and complete system of truth, necessarily begets the same self-sufficient spirit in the pupil. They talk of the perfect arch with its voissoirs and keystone all complete, while the abutments and foundation are all forgotten. They talk of logical coherency and the completeness of systems of knowledge until the temple of science glows with pride and beauty, but the *headstone of the corner* is overlooked and forgotten.

SHALL IT ALWAYS BE SO?

No! make the man of *living earnest faith* the educator. The Christian believer is the only fit educator apart from all considerations of personal contact and example, which itself also is of prime importance. And when I say *Christian*, I mean Christian men in the concrete—devoted adherents of particular Churches. The individual man takes an abiding complexion from his Church and his creed; he cannot help it if he would; he ought not to help it if he could.

It is easy to distinguish an intelligent denominationalism from bigotry. Bigotry is exclusive, uncharitable and covetous and withal ignorant and conceited. While an intelligent adherence to principle is alone capable of a large charity to others. We preach no propagandism on the one hand, nor Broad-churchism on the other. But with the largest liberality to others, we proclaim the necessity of a genuine *Esprit du corps* for our own body—a stronger attachment to the Church of our convictions and unfaltering effort for its interests for the sake of the Master. If we only had this, no good cause would languish. "To your tents, O Israel."

Christian education then means church education, in some form, either Presbyterian or Presbyterial. On this point let every lover of the church say to his neighbor: "If you will not go my way, I will go yours, and we will stand shoulder to shoulder in this great cause."

IV. Let us for a moment glance at the church schools of the past—from the teaching preacher to the formal college. In many places, especially in the earlier history of the church, the minister found himself in a mission field without adequate support. The people needed education as well. Instead of waiting for a sustentation committee to sustain him he went to work and taught during the week, preached on the Sabbath and whenever else he could; visited in the afternoon and on Saturday; rode at night and before breakfast in the morning, that no duty might be omitted.

SECULARIZED?

Who says Paul was secularised when he made tents? No! he accepted it all as part of the cross he was called to bear, in order to win the crown. He carried the same spirit with him into the school-room, and he never lost sight of his mission as a teaching preacher. So, without any theories on the subject, he infused his consecration and his faith into all his teaching. And just where those teaching preachers lived, labored and died you will find that Presbyterianism has the deepest roots to-day, and is bearing the richest fruits. Oh, for a "double portion of their spirit." Then came the college, founded in poverty and prayer by devoted men of God. Without any preconcerted methods and theories, except the "single-eye," the consecration and faith of the men triumphed over defective methods, and those institutions were vastly useful in their earlier days, and some of them still deserve far more support and confidence than they receive. Their point of failure was this: They adopted the secular and worldly methods andtaught every branch of science as a system—complete and perfect in itself. In the necessary division of labor each professor made his own department a unit. In many schools the only Christian features were morning prayers and Sunday Bible-classes, and these were sacrificed to the dead formality of an involuntary routine. Most State schools have done as well on these points. Some church schools have made a

quasi-disclaimer of denominationalism in order to draw a general patronage, while they claimed the patronage of the church because they were church schools, and we have but lately witnessed the unrebuked sacrifice of church allegiance, made on the altar of national and personal popularity, by one of the oldest church schools in the land, and the outside world applauds their far-reaching sagacity. They would never have done it, nor dared to do it, if the popular verdict had not pronounced against church schools. The best of the church schools have professed mainly to do the same things as State schools, and even to excel them with notoriously more limited appliances and defective resources. The verdict of hard, common sense has been disastrous to church schools, except in those churches where the "whipper-in" can apply the party lash and the priest-ridden bigot falls into line whenever the command is given. But when you tell a Presbyterian to sustain a church school, he asks you: "WHY? What, will you do more for my son than the State school does?" There is a feeling deep down in the heart that the Church school has somehow failed to sanctify secular learning, and has not fulfilled her promise of surpassing the State school in the facilities of a mere intellectual culture. So potent have these views become that we find the Presbyterians of another Synod gravely proposing to discard the Church school idea and to found a school for themselves, and everybody who will help them, on the model of a leading State school, and with the inspiration of a mere State pride. Brethren, the church cannot afford it. 'Twere better to leave the whole matter to the State than waste the energies of the Church in such a work. If the church has any mission, it is to sanctify every agency she touches, or else she but nurses a viper in her bosom.

V. No! make a

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL,

if you make any at all! Not on the old fish-trap system, which located the school in some secluded spot where all the surroundings are strictly sectarian, where every singing bird warbles the shibboleth of party, and every croaking raven responds to the same chorus. Such a school may make bigots from whose eyes the scales will never fall. But this is not what we want. The *genius* and *spirit* of the school should be Christian, and all its *methods* converge to the same end. The school of the Papist is a Church

school in a far higher sense than is commonly supposed, and is therefore more dangerous. Their methods are all adapted, with great care, to laying the foundations of an *implicit faith and obedience*—the very foundation of the papal system. Of course we shall not imitate their methods, because we do not wish to do the same thing. But why not learn wisdom from them and adapt our methods so as to lay the foundations of an *intelligent faith*, which is the very life of protestant Christianity?

VI. ARE THESE VIEWS PRACTICAL? AND IF SO, HOW?

The teacher must be full of his work and rise to the level of his calling. Permit me to magnify mine office in this regard. The sculptor may be proud of his work and be filled with a noble enthusiasm as he beholds his marble block rivaling the grace and beauty of nature's noblest forms; but when he is done there is but the cold, dead stone, and one blow of his mallet would shiver it into atoms. The painter plies his brush with the very inspiration of genius, and his eye glistens with triumphant joy as his canvass seems instinct with life, and the parting lips seem just ready to greet him. But his colors were all mixed on a palette and one rude daub would destroy the creations of his genius.

Not so with the living teacher. He moulds and fashions *the man*. His material is the living soul. The form and color of his work will last to eternity. Let him then comprehend his mission.

Again, the foundations of an intelligent faith must be laid in the classroom—not by drawing ingenious parallels, which may be profitable in order to secure a broader view and a higher classification of matters already mastered in detail; much less then by twisting the Bible like a nose of wax to fit every plausible theory. But let the teacher weave natural and revealed truth into the same web. Lay the mortar when you lay the brick, if you would build an enduring wall.

But you ask again, Are these views practical and how? Permit me to give you an outline:

1. Make the Sacred Scriptures a co-ordinate branch of study. We boldly take the ground that no man is truly educated who is not the master of the Book of Books. The word of God in the vernacular should be carefully studied through the entire course, not only in Sabbath Bible-classes, but in the school-room, and the same diligence required in this as in other departments and enforced by the same sanctions.

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THE BIBLE

Is the great treasure house of knowledge and should be taught as such. I do not refer to the niceties of doctrine; these more properly pertain to the department of theological science and do not belong to the collegiate stage. But begin with the Old Testament and teach the history, the archaiology, the types and shadows, the rise, culmination and decline of the Jewish commonwealth, the laws, the fulfilled prophecies, and then the New Testament with its history and fulfillments of prophecy. Then show how the two make one sublime whole, even our glorious Christianity. On the basis of this, in the closing part of the course the pupil may study, to some purpose, the evidences of Christianity, of which the internal are far the strongest. More than this. This intimate knowledge of the Scriptures by the pupil will enable the teacher of other things to show him the unity of all truth at a thousand points, where he never would have suspected it otherwise.

2. Make also the Hellenistic or New Testament Greek a coordinate idiom of the language, at least of equal importance with the Attic or Ionic and let the

GREEK TESTAMENT

be carefully studied throughout the entire course; and this with a twofold advantage. The mind of the pupil is kept in constant contact with divine truth in the original Greek, and he gradually masters the principles of a sound exegesis and is fortified against the plausibilities of mere sciolists and smatterers.

3. Or in the department of

LANGUAGE,

What hinders the teacher from consecrating his work with the leaven of divine truth? When teaching the laws of Euphony and Etymology which pervade all languages, let him say, "He hath made of one blood all the nations that dwell on the face of the earth." Or when dealing with diversities of languages and dialects, let him point to Babel as the solution. Then let the principles of general grammar and the laws of thought as illustrated in Rhetoric and Logic, point to a still higher unity in the race, which will put to shame a Glyddon on the one hand and a Darwin on the other.

And when the classic authors are read, as Cicero, Horace, Euripides, why not point the pupil to the far more glorious words of inspiration, treating of the same subjects. "The words of the wise are as nails driven in a sure place." I have no patience with empty preaching and goodish talk in the class-room; but when you drive a nail clinch it.

4. Or take the studies of my own department,

MENTAL AND MORAL SCIENCE,

Sociology, political Economy and so on. Study man as he is—*fallen*— a broken column—a temple in ruins, the image of God sadly marred but not obliterated—a cursed outcast from his God with no hope for another life but in the provisions of the Gospel. I do here challenge the boasting rationalist "doting about questions and strifes of words" to show me a sound metaphysics which does not derive its life and power from a sound theology, or a system of morals equal to the "sermon on the mount." Would you teach political economy or the principles of Constitutional Law? Why overlook the only body politic fashioned by the God of all and the only civil constitution ever written by his hand? Would you study man's family and social relations? Go to him who "setteth the solitary in families" and who ordained his social relations. Bring the conceits of modern reformers, be they socialist, communist, fourierite, anti-slavery, woman's rights, free love, polygamist, of whom their name is legion; bring them all to the test of Moses and Paul. O, what a wondrous book is this!

Would you study Law? Consult the Lawgiver and learn of him the eternal principles of justice and judgment. "More to be desired are they than gold."

5. Or perhaps you would teach mathematics with its wondrous applications. Why, tis the very pattern book of the universe and should be studied as such. The positive philosophy is no corollary of the philosophy of mathematics rightly understood, though Comte largely represented them both.

6. But pass on to the natural or

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Which are deservedly so prominent among scholastic studies. How shall a man deal with these and forget his God? Here we find his handiwork. His works are his witness; let their witness be heard, and that with no uncertain sound.

"What though no real voice nor sound
In all those radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing as they shine—
The hand that made us is divine."

This is the music of the spheres. Its notes are everywhere declaring the praise and glory of him who made and arranged it all. Let every fact of Science, however ascertained, whether you sweep the heavens with telescopic lens, or whether you classify the teeming animalculæ on the surface of a leaf with the aid of microscopic vision, or whether you decipher some hidden law by patient and laborious calculation; let every fact of science point to the God of Science. And while you handle it, label it, classify it, and place it in its true relations to all truth, just as a skillful clerk labels his papers, or a Geologist his fossils.

IN SHORT,

Every course of study, as far as may be, should receive a religious, if not a Theological aspect, for man has a religious and a moral nature to be fed or starved. And, besides, every man, especially every educated man, is set for the defence of the truth somewhere—be he minister or deacon, merchant or mechanic, lawyer or physician—and how shall he defend the truth unless he be thoroughly furnished?

7. THEOLOGY PROPER,

might be engrafted on the same school and taught in the same spirit; not as a self-sufficient and complete system in itself, but as fitted to, and comprehending all the rest. We do not want mere theologians encased in an armor-plate of orthodoxy defying friend or foe. But we want an active, earnest ministry, educated in sympathy with nature as God has made it, and with the world as it is. Let our ministry, and our eldership, and our members be educated so, and you will have a generation of co-workers with God; and why? Because knowledge, consecrated by divine truth and assimilated by faith at every step, grows into the very essence of the soul, and gives vigor and precision to every faculty—to say nothing of a long-tested promise, "Them that honor me I will honor."

VII. Then let the teacher comprehend his mission and be

full of faith and consecration, and his work will intensify his faith till the very "Darkness shall be light around him." The

FOOTPRINTS

of the Master will multiply upon him as he searches for them and teaches others how to recognize them. Such teaching awakens a relish and enthusiasm both new and strange.

Individuals do sometimes act out these views just as practice always precedes theory. My honored preceptor in mental and moral science is perhaps the noblest specimen of a teacher on this model the world ever saw. Others, too, have done valiant service for the truth, by reason of their own faith and consecration. But

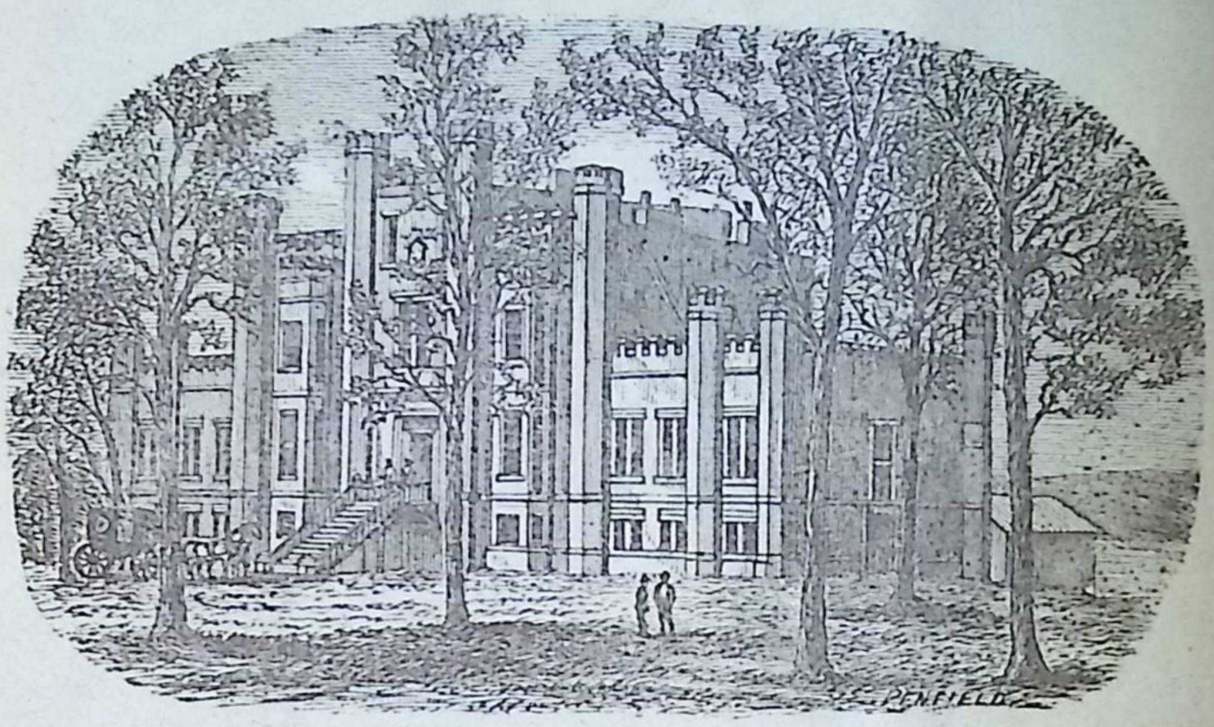
WHERE IS THE COLLEGE

constituted on this basis? Or where the Church which has undertaken to make these views her watchword of success? Still it can be done, and it will be done by more faithful hearts than yours and mine, if we fail. The Church will yet awake to her mission to make faith a verity in all education, and the truth of God's word the master-key to every door of knowledge. How else shall she meet the enemies that come in like a flood? Abandon the heights to the enemy and your very hearthstones are in danger. Occupy them yourselves with the artillery of heaven, and "one shall chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight."

I have no quarrel with State schools, nor with the schools of other denominations. I bid them God speed, with the hope and the prayer that they will learn to apply these same principles so necessary to a true success.. But of this I am confident: As a church we cannot afford to hand over the higher education of our sons (after they leave the parental roof) to other hands, church or state, lest they return to their homes to pity if not to mock the faith of their fathers, full of the conceit of so-called liberal views and advanced thought. Let one generation be educated so, and where is the old-fashioned faith you love so dearly? Then let every lover of the church arise and gird himself for the work and the cause advances. Let no man wait for his neighbor, but put his shoulder to the wheel. Let us solve the practical details of this great work and there is a glorious future before us.

"Let us go up and possess the land."

Stewart College,



UNDER THE CARE OF THE

SYNOD OF NASHVILLE,

REV. J. B. SHEARER, D. D. Pres't.

CLARKSVILLE, TENN.